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SUBJECT: URIBE REJECTS AUC PROPOSAL TO JOIN MILITARY

¶1. (U) President Uribe shot down a United Self Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) proposal that demobilized paramilitaries be incorporated into the armed forces. On October 28, Uribe said that members of an illegal armed group who demobilize would be given generous reinsertion benefits but would not be allowed to join the military. Uribe was responding to an AUC communique released on October 26 that proposed demobilized AUC members assist the armed forces by protecting the country's infrastructure. The AUC specified that the Ministry of Interior rather than the Ministry of Defense should supervise the initiative.

¶2. (U) Although some high level officials, including Minister of Defense Uribe and OAS Mission Director Caramagna, have said parts of the proposal are worth considering, President Uribe's statements make it clear that demobilized paramilitaries will not be allowed to join the military.

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